DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 449 599 EC 308 205

AUTHOR	deFur, Sharon
TITLE	Designing Individualized Education Program (IEP) Transition Plans. ERIC Digest #E598.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Reston, VA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-EC-00-7
PUB DATE	2000-11-00
NOTE	4p.
CONTRACT	ED-99-CO-0026
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Council for Exceptional Children, 1110 North Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA 22201-5709; Tel: 800-328-0272 (Toll-free); e-mail: ericec@cec.sped.org; Web site: http://www.ericec.org
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071) -- ERIC Digests in Full Text (073)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Compliance (Legal); Decision Making; *Disabilities; *Education Work Relationship; Educational Legislation; Federal Legislation; High Schools; *Individualized Education Programs; Student Needs; Student Participation; Student Rights; *Transitional Programs
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests; *Individualized Transition Plans; *Individuals with Disabilities Educ Act Amend 1997

ABSTRACT

This digest describes the process of designing quality individualized education program (IEP) transition plans for secondary students with disabilities as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as amended in 1997. It stresses the importance of taking an early, long-range approach, preferably beginning at age 14 or earlier and required by age 16. Eleven questions to guide decisions about transition service needs are offered. The next section focuses on development of a comprehensive transition plan, summarizes relevant IDEA regulations, and lists examples of transition activities. Next the required participants in the transition plan meeting are identified with emphasis on the important role of the student and his/her family. Finally, the digest briefly addresses the process of transferring IDEA rights from parents or guardians to the student when the student reaches the age of majority. (DB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 449 599

ERIC DIGEST

NOVEMBER 2000

E598

EDO-EC-00-7

DESIGNING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) TRANSITION PLANS

By

SHARON deFUR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EC 308205

ERIC®

Digest

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1589
1-800-328-0272 ericec@cec.sped.org http://ericec.org

November 2000 **E598** **EDO-EC-00-7**

Designing Individualized Education Program (IEP) Transition Plans

Sharon deFur

The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) emphasized that students with disabilities are to be prepared for employment and independent living and that specific attention is to be paid to the secondary education they receive. The law also requires coordinated and documented planning. Early and meaningful transition planning, which actively involves students and their families, has a positive influence on students' post-school success and independence. This digest describes the process of designing quality IEP transition plans.

Taking An Early, Long-Range Approach

Generally, an IEP addresses services to be provided to the student during one school year. But when it comes to transition requirements, the IEP team must think and plan several years ahead. The highest incidence of dropping out and of disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion occurs during the first two years of high school. To combat this pattern, IDEA requires that the IEP team carefully consider post-school goals when the student is about to enter high school at age 14. Beginning at age 16 (or younger, if appropriate) a statement of transition services needed by the student must be included in the IEP.

High school experiences, both academic and social, greatly influence future options for all students. For adolescents with disabilities, these experiences are pivotal. Decisions about any transition service needs or a student's course of study should be grounded in the answers to the following questions:

- What are his dreams? His vision for life as a young adult?
- What are her strengths? How will she use them to build success during high school?
- Will he seek a regular high school diploma requiring a prescribed course of study with possible accompanying proficiency tests?
- Will she work toward a vocational completion certificate?
- Does she have a career interest now? If not, when and how can the team help her discover her interests and preferences?
- Does this team believe that he will remain in public school through the maximum age of eligibility? If so, what age-appropriate experiences may be available after 18?
- What skills need to be developed or improved to help her make progress toward her goals?
- Are there any at-risk behaviors that might interfere with his success during high school?
- In what school and community activities will she participate?
- What does the team believe his high school course of study will look like?
- What transition services, supports and accommodations does she need for success in high school?

Discussing and answering these questions will meet the intent of the IDEA regulations, assist in preventing school failure, and promote success in high school for students.

Although IDEA does not require formal transition planning earlier than age 14, approaching the elementary IEP process with an eye to the future builds a foundation for secondary school transition planning. All IEP decisions should be made in the context of how that decision may affect the child's future school or post-school experiences. For example, participation in the general curriculum or the state testing program as an elementary student may increase the likelihood of continued involvement in those aspects of schooling needed to earn a high school diploma. Early career education will increase self-awareness and self-determination.

Developing a Comprehensive Plan

Section 300.29 of the IDEA regulations defines transition service as a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that

- Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation
- Is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests
- Includes instruction; related services; community experiences; the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation

Realistic transition activities must be outlined in the IEP. Developing skills for an unneeded labor market does not promote employment, and obtaining a job without transportation options compromises the possibility of success. Roles and responsibilities should be written into the plan. Examples of transition activities include

- Assessing student needs, interests, or preferences for future education, employment, and adult living and setting future goals in these areas
- Identifying, exploring, and trying out transition placements that match the student's assessment and vision and providing community experiences related to future goals
- Instructing the student in the academic, vocational, and adult living skills needed to achieve transition goals, including self-determination
- Identifying and providing the accommodations, supports, or related services the student needs
- Coordinating with adult services organizations and helping

EC308205

- families identify resources and natural supports
- Providing or planning follow-up or follow-along support once the student develops independence in a transition activity or graduates

Participants in Developing the Transition Plan

IDEA requires that the following attend the IEP meeting:

- Student
- Parent (and if desired, the family)
- The student's special education teacher or related services provider
- The student's regular education teacher
- A local educational agency representative
- Other agency personnel who have knowledge or expertise required to best serve the student's needs

The law makes it clear that the student is the most important member of the team. In fact, according to the IDEA regulations at §300.344, the student must be invited to participate in the IEP meeting whenever the purpose of the meeting is related to transition (that is, any IEP meeting after reaching age 14). If the student does not attend the meeting, then IDEA regulations expect schools to take other steps to ensure the student's preferences and interests are considered.

Before the IEP meeting, students should be coached and taught the skills they will need participate in or lead their IEP transition meetings. With support and direct instruction, students can become aware of their strengths and needs, learn to advocate for themselves, and learn to set and evaluate goals.

When the purpose of the IEP includes developing a transition plan, families must be advised of this purpose. Prior to the meeting, many schools send families materials to help them think about their child's future. At the meeting, the staff asks family members to describe their vision for their child's future. The IEP team uses the family's knowledge of the student in planning and identifies resources the family can use during the transition process. Effective transition planning adopts an approach that is sensitive to the culture and context of the family, thus empowering the family for its role in guiding their adult child with a disability.

Transition planning should help students and families connect with the adult service system. Adult service organizations that may provide or pay for transition services must be invited to participate in the development of the IEP transition plan. If they are unable to attend, then the school must find alternative ways of involving them in planning any transition services that they might pay for or provide. Each transition activity should include someone who consents to monitor the provision of that service as outlined in the IEP.

Guidance counselors, related service providers, vocational educators, and administrators all have a potential place and voice in designing transition plans for students. These participants may vary depending on the goals and needs of the student.

Transferring Rights at the Age of Majority

IDEA applies to students until they leave the school system or until age 22. Once they have reached the age of majority in their state all IDEA rights will transfer from their parents or guardian to them. At least one year before the birthday that signifies adulthood, the IEP team must make certain that families and students understand that this transfer will occur. Establishing guardianship is one alternative to transferring rights; another alternative is determining, using state policies, that the adult child is unable to make informed decisions. These alternatives are appropriate for only a few students.

Discussions that help families consider the adult independence alternatives for their child benefit transition planning. They also help educate students and families in how students can assume the role of primary decision maker in their futures. The transfer of rights illustrates the importance of developing student self-determination.

Putting it All Together

A transition plan is an ongoing process. Minimally, the IEP team reviews the transition plan as part of the annual review. The written plan provides the framework, but like any good plan the process remains open to new information. All team members need to be aware of the goals and planned activities so that everyone can reinforce progress toward the student's goals. Implementing the transition plan and the coordinated set of activities requires all IEP team members to make a commitment to promoting adult success for youths with disabilities.

Resources

Clark, G., & Patton, J. (1997). *Transition planning inventory*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. (Phone: 800-897-3202.)

deFur, S. (1999). *Transition planning: A team effort*. Washington, DC: National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). (Phone: 800-695-0285.)

Field, S., Martin, J.E., Miller, R., Ward, M. & Wehmeyer, M. (1997). *A practical guide for teaching self-determination*. Reston, VA.: The Council for Exceptional Children (Phone: 888-232-7733.)

Kohler, P. (1998). Implementing a transition perspective of education. In F. Rusch & J. Chadsey (Eds.) *Beyond high school: Transition from school to work* (pp 179-205). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing. (Phone: 650-595-2350.)

Patton, J. & Dunn, C. (1998). *Transition from school to young adulthood: Basic concepts and recommended practices*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. (Phone: 800-897-3202.)

Sitlington, P., Neubert, D., Begun, W., Lombard, R., & Leconte, P. (1996). *Assess for success: Handbook on transition assessment*. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. (Phone: 888-232-7733.)

Storms, J., O'Leary, E., & Williams, J., (May 2000). *The IDEA of 1997: Transition requirements: A guide for states, districts, schools, universities, and families*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration. (ERIC Number ED 441 324. (Phone: 800-443-3742.)

West, L., Corbey, S., Boyer-Stephens, A., Jones, B., Miller, R & Sarkees-Wircenski, M. (1999). *Integrating transition planning into the IEP process*. (2nd ed.) Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. (Phone: 888-232-7733.)

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated, but please acknowledge your source.

This digest was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, under Contract No. ED-99-CO-0026. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the positions of OERI or the Department of Education.